



## DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

### Questions in Preparation for Confirmation

*Most Rev. Michael F. Burbidge*

*By the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out in Confirmation  
the faithful are more fully conformed to Christ  
and they are strengthened with the power to bear witness to Christ.  
(Cf. Order of Confirmation, no. 1)*

#### **1. What is a Sacrament?**

A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.

#### **2. What is grace?**

Grace is a supernatural gift from God to make us holy and to unite us with Him now and forever. Each sacrament gives and strengthens the active presence, life, and love of the Holy Trinity in us. Each sacrament gives its own special graces.

#### **3. When did Jesus institute the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

Jesus promised to the Apostles that he would ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to enlighten, strengthen, and guide them. At Pentecost (fifty days after Easter), the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. Tongues of fire rested upon their heads and the fire of God's love filled their souls.

#### **4. What are the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit?**

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| 1. Wisdom           | <i>helps us to know God's will for our lives</i>                 |
| 2. Understanding    | <i>enables us to make the faith our own</i>                      |
| 3. Knowledge        | <i>allows us to come to know and be in relationship with God</i> |
| 4. Fortitude        | <i>helps us to be courageous in the defense of our faith</i>     |
| 5. Counsel          | <i>aids us in making right judgments</i>                         |
| 6. Piety            | <i>assists us in being prayerful, reverent, and holy</i>         |
| 7. Fear of the Lord | <i>is a holy awe and reverence for God</i>                       |

## **5. What did the Apostles do after Pentecost?**

Filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles went forth to fulfill what Jesus commanded them: “Go forth to all nations. Preach the Gospel. Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach everything I have commanded you.” To this day, the Church continues to fulfill what Jesus commanded.

## **6. What is special about the Church? What are the Four Marks of the Church?**

The Church is founded by Jesus Christ. It has four marks:

1. The Church is one because of her source, foundation, and bonds of unity in Christ.
2. The Church is holy because she is united with Christ, who through the Church sanctifies all people and makes possible holiness in life.
3. The Church is catholic because the Church is universal across all times and all places.
4. The Church is apostolic because she traces her teaching and authority to the Apostles.

## **7. How is the Sacrament of Confirmation celebrated?**

Confirmation is celebrated by the community gathered around the Bishop, and it is always celebrated within a Liturgy of the Word.

After the Gospel, the candidates are called and the Bishop instructs them in a homily. The Bishop then asks the candidates to renew their baptismal promises.

Next, the Bishop expresses the Church’s prayer that the Father send the Holy Spirit.

Then, the Bishop places his hand on the head on the candidates, and then he anoints the candidates with Holy Chrism by making the sign of the cross. After the anointing, he offers peace to the candidates.

Finally, the community prays for the newly Confirmed.

## 8. What is Sacred Chrism?

Sacred Chrism is a perfumed oil blessed by the Bishop. Anointing with Sacred Chrism signifies the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and our being made more like Christ in order to continue his work in the world.

*Oils were used by the Jewish people to anoint priests, prophets, and kings. These anointings showed that God called them to a special role of leadership and would empower them with the graces needed to fulfill the responsibilities.*

*In Confirmation, Christians are anointed with Chrism. By receiving the Holy Spirit, we are made more like Christ and are strengthened in doing Christ's work in the world. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit empower us to fulfill these responsibilities.*

*Chrism reminds us of the sacred character sealed on our soul (as oil on a garment leaves a permanent mark, so Confirmation leaves a permanent mark on the soul). The fragrance of Chrism reminds us, as St. Paul said, to "put on the aroma of Christ."*

## 9. How will I live the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Be able to tell the Bishop how you will live the Sacrament of Confirmation.

*For example,*

- *attend Mass each Sunday and Holy Day;*
- *pray each day;*
- *read Sacred Scripture;*
- *go to confession regularly;*
- *continue to learn about the faith;*
- *help in the mission of the Church (for example, by participating in the life of my parish);*
- *faithfully fulfill my vocation (for example, be married in the Church and, God willing, raise children in the faith; for example, say "yes" to the call to be a Priest, Sister, or Brother).*

## 10. Who is your Confirmation Saint?

Be able to tell the Bishop about your Confirmation Saint, what that Saint did to inspire you, and why you chose the saint.